

Romans

Theme: The Gospel [1:16-17]

• The Power of God for Salvation [1:16]

- For I am not ashamed of the gospel,
Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον,
 - The word “ashamed” is ἐπαισχύνομαι (epaischunomai) which means “experience painful feelings or a sense of loss because of an activity”.
 - Later in this letter Paul uses this word regarding indulging the things of the flesh [Rom 6:19-21].
 - He also uses this word 3 times in the first chapter of 2nd Timothy [2 Tim 1:8; 12; 16].
 - The author of Hebrews uses this word regarding Christ considering us as His brethren [Heb 2:11] and the Father’s acceptance of those who long for a heavenly “country” [Heb 11:16].
 - This is the fourth time in the opening verses of this letter that Paul refers to the gospel.
 - The gospel message – the righteousness of God being revealed from faith to faith – is the theme of this letter.
- for it is the power of God to bring about salvation for everyone who believes,
δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι,
 - The word “power” is δύναμις (dunamis) which means “power”, “strength” or “capability”.
 - The emphasis of this word is on functional power – power in action or the ability to perform an action.
 - The word “for” is εἰς (eis) which means “to” or “toward”.
 - This word is sometimes used in Greek to point to the end result of an act or series of actions.
 - The phrase “to everyone who believes” is a dative clause that can be translated “to...” or “for...”.
 - Because we translated εἰς (eis) as “to” this phrase is better translated “for...”.
- to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.
Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι.
 - The word “first” is from πρῶτος (prōtos) which simply means “first”.
 - This can be first in time/set/space or can pertain to prominence (foremost).
 - Here it simply refers to a preference given to the Jewish people in chronological order.
 - It was customary at the time for the gospel to be presented in the synagogues before taking the message to the general public, and Paul followed this practice [Acts 13:5; 17:1-3].
 - The word “Greek” is from Ἑλλην (Hellēn) which is the same root word we saw in verse 14.
 - However, this word is used here in contrast with “Jew” rather than “barbarians”.
 - This use simply refers to a non-Jew or Gentile.

- Principles of Romans 1:16
 - We all have sins from our past that we are, quite appropriately, ashamed of [Ezek 16:60-63].
 - However, we should never be ashamed of the gospel message [Psalm 119:46].
 - The world tries to make us accept the sins of the flesh and be ashamed of the gospel message.
 - The gospel is a message from God and carries with it the very power of God [1 Cor 1:18].
 - The gospel is a particular message from God directed at unbelievers and has the power to bring about the salvation of anyone who believes in Jesus Christ [John 3:16; 6:40; Acts 16:31].
 - The gospel is a message from God intended for everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, skin color, country of birth, gender, etc.
 - For the Jewish people, the idea of God being the God of the Gentiles was an unfamiliar concept [Rom 3:28-30].

- **Faith and the Righteousness of God [1:17]**

- For in *the gospel* the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;
δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν,
 - The word “it” is a dative, neuter pronoun referring back to the word “gospel” in verse 16.
 - Paul now explains some of what is in the gospel message that makes it so powerful.
 - The word “righteousness” δικαιοσύνη (dikaiosunē) which means “righteousness” or “justice”.
 - In this context this word is highlighting God’s uprightness in the judicial sense.
 - Contained within the gospel message is a wonderful explanation regarding how a holy God can bring salvation to unrighteous people without compromising His holiness.
 - The word “revealed” is from ἀποκαλύπτω (apokaluptō) which means “cause something to be fully known” and is the root of our English words “apocalypse” and “apocalyptic”.
 - The phrase “from faith to faith” is a literal translation of the Greek in this verse.
 - Much discussion has been dedicated to the meaning of this phrase.
 - The answer resides in the remainder of this verse which says, “the righteous man shall live by faith”.
 - This O.T. quote is used of the faith of salvation as well as ongoing faith [Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38].
 - The first “faith” in this phrase is the faith at the moment of our salvation resulting in eternal life.
 - The second “faith” in this phrase is our ongoing faith which results in experiential sanctification.
- as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”
καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται.
 - The phrase “as it is written” is often used to introduce an O.T. quote.
 - Jesus used this phrase to introduce a quote from Isaiah [Mark 7:6].
 - Paul used this phrase 14 times in Romans alone [Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:4, 10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 15:3, 9, 21] and 5 more times in 1st & 2nd Cor [1 Cor 1:31; 2:9; 10:7; 2 Cor 8:15; 9:9].
 - This phrase is significant because it brings attention to the fact that the quote which follows is part of the written word of God and should be given appropriate consideration.
 - What follows is a quotation of Hab 2:4.
 - The Hebrew text reads a little different, but this is a quotation from the Greek O.T. translation (LXX).

- Principles of Romans 1:17
 - God is infinitely righteous and He cannot violate His perfect righteousness in dealing with creatures.
 - When Adam ate of the fruit in the garden, God rightly judged the entire human race to be condemned under sin [1 Cor 15:22; Gal 3:22].
 - It would be unjust for God to simply set aside that righteous judgment in order to save mankind.
 - The message of the gospel reveals how God is able to save sinful mankind from condemnation without compromising His own righteousness in the process.
 - By offering Himself as a sacrifice for sin [Heb 7:26-27], Jesus Christ took upon Himself the judgment all of us rightly deserved.
 - Jesus suffered the just (righteous) penalty for sin so that unrighteous mankind can now be made righteous by God through nothing more than faith in Jesus [Rom 3:21-26; 2 Cor 5:21].
 - This imputation of God's righteousness to all who believe in Jesus is an essential (necessary) component of our salvation.
 - Because the just penalty for sin was placed upon Jesus as our substitute, God can now forgive the sins of the one who believes in Jesus without becoming an unrighteous judge in the process.
 - However, the sacrifice of Jesus also allows the one who continues in faith to walk in righteousness [Heb 9:13-14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 1:7].
 - We "live by faith" when we are made alive together with Christ at the moment we place our faith in Jesus [Eph 2:4-9; Col 2:13-14].
 - We also "live by faith" when, as already born-again believers, we continue our walk in faith [Col 2:6; Heb 10:36-39].
 - Notice that in this critical passage regarding the gospel, there is no mention of works or baptism or anything else other than faith alone.
 - The message of the gospel is that Jesus Christ has already done all of the work on the cross [John 19:30] and salvation is offered to mankind on the basis of faith alone in Christ alone [John 6:28-29].